

S/N 10/032,701

Case Ref. No.: 659-920

Client Ref. No.: 17,595

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1, 3-5, 7-10, 21-26, 28, 30, 41 and 43 without prejudice so that the claims read as follows:

Claims 1-10 (Cancelled).

11. (Original) An absorbent garment comprising:

a body panel having a line of weakness extending across at least a portion thereof, wherein said body panel has a tear strength of less than about 5 lbf along said line of weakness.

12. (Previously Presented) The absorbent garment of claim 11 wherein said tear strength of said body panel along said line of weakness is less than about 4 lbf.

13. (Previously Presented) The absorbent garment of claim 11 wherein said tear strength of said body panel along said line of weakness is less than about 3 lbf.

14. (Previously Presented) The absorbent garment of claim 11 wherein said body panel has a tensile strength of less than about 6.62 lbf across said line of weakness.

15. (Previously Presented) The absorbent garment of claim 11 wherein said line of weakness extends across an entire length of said body panel.

16. (Previously Presented) The absorbent garment of claim 11 further comprising a fastener member bridging said line of weakness, wherein said fastener

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member is fixedly secured to said body panel on one side of said line of weakness and is releasably engaged with said body panel on the other side of said line of weakness.

17. (Previously Presented) The absorbent garment of claim 11 wherein said line of weakness comprises a perforation.

18. (Previously Presented) The absorbent garment of claim 11 wherein said body panel comprises a nonwoven spunbond material.

19. (Previously Presented) The absorbent garment of claim 11 wherein said body panel comprises an elastomeric material.

20. (Previously Presented) The absorbent garment of claim 11 wherein said body panel comprises a front body panel joined to a rear body panel at a seam, wherein said line of weakness is formed in said front body panel.

Claims 21-30 (Cancelled).

31. (Original) A method of using an absorbent garment comprising:
providing an absorbent garment comprising a body panel having a line of weakness extending across at least a portion thereof; and
applying a tear force to said body panel along said line of weakness, wherein said tear force is less than about 5 lbf, and thereby breaking said body panel along said line of weakness.

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32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31 wherein said applying said tear force comprises applying said tear force after said absorbent garment is fitted on a user.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31 wherein said applying said tear force comprises applying said tear force before said absorbent garment is fitted on a user.

34. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31 wherein said line of weakness extends across an entire length of said body panel.

35. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31 further comprising a fastener member bridging said line of weakness, wherein said fastener member is fixedly secured to said body panel on one side of said line of weakness and is releasably engaged with said body panel on the other side of said line of weakness, and further comprising disengaging said fastener member from said body panel on said other side of said line of weakness prior to said applying said tear force to said body panel across said line of weakness and prior to said breaking said body panel at said line of weakness.

36. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31 wherein said line of weakness comprises a perforation.

37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31 wherein said body panel comprises a front body panel joined to a rear body panel at a seam, wherein said line of weakness is formed in said front body panel.

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38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31 wherein said tear force applied to said body panel along said line of weakness is less than about 4 lbf.

39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31 wherein said tear force applied to said body panel along said line of weakness is less than about 3 lbf.

40. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31 further comprising applying a tensile force to said body panel across said line of weakness simultaneously with said applying said tear force, wherein said tensile force is less than about 6.62 lbf.

Claim 41 (Cancelled).

42. (Previously Presented) The absorbent garment of claim 20 wherein said front body panel has a first terminal crotch edge and said rear body panel has a second terminal crotch edge, wherein said first and second terminal crotch edges are spaced apart and define a gap therebetween, and further comprising an absorbent composite bridging said gap and connected to said front and rear body panels.

Claim 43 (Cancelled).

44. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 37 wherein said front body panel has a first terminal crotch edge and said rear body panel has a second terminal crotch edge, wherein said first and second terminal crotch edges are spaced apart and define a gap therebetween, and further comprising an absorbent composite bridging said gap and connected to said front and rear body panels.

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IN THE DRAWINGS:

Applicants amended Figures 1 and 2 in a Drawing Amendment submitted January 7, 2004. Applicants inadvertently omitted an explanation that reference number "142" had been changed to -- 42 -- in Figure 1, and further that the lead lines from reference number 167 had been made dashed in Figure 2, rather than solid. Applicants apologize for any inconvenience to the Examiner and respectfully request that the Drawing Amendment be entered.

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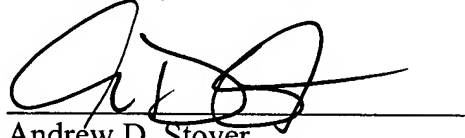
CONCLUSION:

Applicants have cancelled without prejudice the non-elected claims of Groups I and III. This amendment has not necessitated any change of inventorship.

In addition, Applicants respectfully request that the Drawing Amendment filed January 9, 2004 (mailed January 7, 2004) be entered. The Examiner has not indicated that the Drawing Amendment was not entered, and Applicants have hereby supplemented the explanation of the Drawing Amendment. If the Examiner needs any additional communication to ensure entry of the Drawing Amendment, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned attorney.

Of course, any questions concerning this election and/or amendment should be directed to the undersigned attorney at (312) 321-4713.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: April 7, 2004

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